

Ossipee Master Plan

Chapter 3: LAND USE

The Land Use Chapter describes the existing patterns of development in Ossipee, as well as the natural features that have influenced these patterns, and attempts to predict future development. Complex Systems at UNH used information from 1992 to develop mapping for the analysis and presentation of data. The town received a set of these maps provided by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests and the Green Mountain Conservation Group. Smaller copies are included with this Master Plan update in the Appendix. One of the first things Ossipee needs to do is a Land Use Field Survey, because the present information is at least ten years old.

In 2005 a member of the Ossipee Conservation Commission did an inventory, by Tax Map and Lot, of valuable wetlands and farmlands that are lacking permanent protection. These spreadsheets and a narrative are included in this chapter.

Suggestions on the format of the Chapter were provided by Lakes Region Planning Commission.

This Master Plan attempts to update the Land Use information in the 1983 Master Plan, which was very thorough and still relevant twenty years later.

EXISTING LAND USE

Of the 48,168 acres in Ossipee, 3,427 acres are currently developed; this is about 7% of the land in Ossipee. Ossipee's development centers around the villages of Center Ossipee, Ossipee Corner, West Ossipee, the lakes and ponds, and along Route 16. Granite and Water Village also are areas of development, which have a separate identity. Developed land includes residences, roads, community facilities and recreational land.

The community is still primarily rural, as is evidenced by the low commercial and industrial acreage.

Respondents to the Master Plan survey valued this aspect of life in Ossipee. It is important to the residents that a plan for future land use in Ossipee retains its rural nature.

Land Use by Type:

Land Use	#of Acres	%of Total
Residential	2549	5
Commercial	297	0.6
Industrial	6	0.01
Recreational	498	1
Agricultural	403	0.8
Forested	40,330	83
Gravel Pits	2753*	3
Surface Water	3095	6

Complex Systems Research Center, UNH 2001

* This number of acres comes from the Excavation Intents of the pits in Ossipee which filed to excavate in 2003 and the stationary pit of Ossipee Aggregates. There are 174 acres in the Excavation areas of these pits. There are also many pits, which have been abandoned or do not have an Ossipee Excavation permit. The large number of acres of gravel pits in Ossipee accounts for the importance of that resource in the town.

Traditionally in Ossipee most development has been single-family residential buildings. The 5.3% of the total in residential use remains the most common land use, other than forested land that is about 83% of the total acres in Ossipee. This is slightly higher than the 80% percent of the land forested in Carroll County. The commercial uses on 297 acres or .6% of the land are located in and around the villages and along major highways. Industrial sites are small and scattered. There are only 50 acres or 0.1% taken up with transportation and communications. Agricultural land makes up only .8% or 403 acres in Ossipee, however 929 acres of Prime Farmland soil have been identified.

OSSIPEE SUBDIVISION INFORMATION

The survey of Subdivisions compiled for this chapter reveals the history of town growth over 17 years, 1989 to 2005. The majority of these Subdivisions were small. The reason for including the many small subdivisions is that they are often built on fairly quickly and so impact the community right away, whereas a larger subdivision is usually built-up over a long time period.

Putting together the spreadsheet, Subdivisions in Ossipee, took a great deal of time. It is hoped that this will be a living document that is continually corrected and updated as necessary. Lakes Region Planning Commission advised that this information would be most useful in a table which listed the year of subdivision, the name/location of the subdivision, the lots as identified on the current Ossipee Tax Map, the number of lots, the number of lots that are built on and the use of the land in the subdivision as commercial or residential. The number of lots that are built on has increased significantly since this research was done, so it was updated again in 2006.

Documents used for reference were survey maps, case folders and plans from the Planning Board files, assessor's records, Ossipee Tax Maps, deeds and plans from the

Carroll County Registry of Deeds and information from the Zoning Enforcement Officer's records. In some cases it was possible to talk to the people who subdivided the property. Information from the 1983 Master Plan was also incorporated with more recent data.

This project was combined with a Lakes Region Planning Commission project designed to identify when the most subdivisions were created in this area. The end result was a map located in the Planning Board office. The subdivisions are printed in different colors by decade, so it is easy to identify when and where the most subdivisions took place.

THE NUMBER OF SUBDIVISIONS DONE IN RECENT YEARS

1989	12
1990	5
1991	4
1992	3
1993	4
1994	5
1995	6
1996	4
1997	7
1998	3
1999	3
2000	2
2001	3
2002	3
2003	6
2004	4
2005	5

In many cases it was difficult to identify the exact number of lots in the older large subdivisions, because the Planning Board often accepted some lots and required changes before accepting others, sometimes over a period of years. Later subdivisions and mergers complicated the task. The map and lot numbers listed agree with the current map and lot designations on the Ossipee Tax Map, not the designations or numerations used by the people doing the subdividing.

In some cases it was not possible to find definite answers. In those cases the year, the lots or the subdivider were identified as closely as possible, sometimes by using several sources, rather than omitting the subdivision from the chart. It is hoped that anyone with documentation which varies from that given or adds to it, will bring it to the attention of the Planning Board, to increase the accuracy of the chart.

Subdivisions Plotted by Year and Size

# of lots	up to 1981	1982-90	1991-99	2000-2005		
1-3	58	68	45	25		
4-6	22	11	7	2		
7-9	9	3	1	1		
10-12	2	0	1	0		
13-15	4	2	1	0		
16-18	3	1	0	0		
+19	22	2	2	0		

Conclusions about Subdivisions

Combining information from the spreadsheet, the map prepared by Lakes Region Planning Commission, and the other graphs leads to some relevant conclusions about subdivisions in Ossipee. Most of the subdivisions in Ossipee were done in the 1970's. Almost all of the big subdivisions were done before 1981 by real estate companies, such as Northern Land Traders. In the 1980's most of the subdivisions were 2 or 3 lot subdivisions. This trend has continued until the present time. Since the late 1990's Ossipee has averaged 2 or 3 subdivisions per year and the majority of them have been small. There has been a small increase since 2003.

The earliest developments were those of wealthy people who bought land for summer homes on the shores of Ossipee Lake or up in the scenic mountains near ponds, such as Ossipee Lake Shores and Roland Park. In the 50's and 60's there was little subdivision, but the 70's was the start of a great flurry of subdivision activity, which continued in the 80's. Large tracts of land were divided up into lots. People who bought the lots became part of private landowner associations who were responsible for maintaining their own roads. They are located on all types of terrain in Ossipee. For example, Knox Mountain, Sky View and Ridgeview were located in the steeper areas and others were on more accessible flatter land, often near a body of water. These include Indian Mound, Woodcrest, Blueberry Estates, Ossipee Pines and Brown Ridge Estates. Some developments were planned for the more affluent, such as The Bluffs with its private beach and Windsock built around an airstrip.

Most of the property around ponds, such as Duncan Lake and Conner Pond, was divided up. The landowners formed associations to take care of their roads, sometimes a water system, and to maintain their privacy and rights to use the body of water.

Sometimes developers were unable to carry out their grandiose plans for common green areas, club houses, boat basins, etc. Many of the lots in some of the subdivisions were not built on right away. Some of these lots have been bought by real estate salesmen or taken by the town for back taxes owed. Over the years most of the developments are filling up, as the population of Ossipee continues to climb. In the 90's the number of subdivisions dropped significantly. The only large one was the 60+ lot Soaring Heights, which now contains a number of expensive homes. On the other side of the economic picture, the Folsom Brook Housing Development, originally a Community Development

Block Grant (CDBG) project for moderate-income residents, which sat empty for years, has been filled up with modular homes on town water and sewer.

Campgrounds and manufactured home parks have been included with subdivisions because the state of New Hampshire calls them subdivisions. Campgrounds have been in operation in Ossipee for a long time. Good examples are Terrace in the Pines and Camp Sokokis. All of the campgrounds have been or are being upgraded, because of state septic requirements. However the state also requires that they be for seasonal use only. There are two large mobile home parks, one at each end of Ossipee, which house large numbers of residents. Recently the occupants began the process of forming co-operatives to own their own homes and maintain the park.

Implementation Recommendations:

Conduct a new Land Use Field Survey to compare today's land use patterns to previous ones and to project future ones under the present Zoning Ordinance.

Update the Ossipee Subdivision Spreadsheet yearly with each new Subdivision name and location, Tax Map page and lot numbers, number and acreage of lots, numbers of lots built on, and type of use (residential, commercial or municipal).

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined as those areas inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. (RSA 482-A: 2, X) Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs and both poorly and very poorly drained soils.

Wetlands store floodwaters during peak overflow periods, so they are important for flood control.

Wetlands also store and retain nutrients preventing their addition to downstream lakes, discharge water to streams during periods of low flow and provide prime habitat for many types of wildlife. Because they provide protection for some ecosystems, they foster biodiversity. Ossipee has 3,853 acres or 8.4% of the total land area in wetlands mostly located along the rivers and around the lakes and ponds. Many towns have established Prime Wetlands according to RSA 482 A: 15 to further protect their wetlands, but Ossipee has not, nor has it done a complete wetlands inventory.

Implementation Recommendations:

Inventory wetlands to identify priority areas for protection.

Consider establishing Prime Wetlands under RSA 482-A:15 to further protect these natural resources.

Determine desirability of establishing buffer zones around water bodies and large wetlands as in nearby towns to assure any tree harvests occur with care over time.

Floodplains and Floodplain Soils

Floodplains are the periodically inundated flat lands adjacent to rivers, lakes, and streams. They are important because they store water during times of flooding and provide corridors for wildlife to travel.

Floodplain development poses many problems, including the destruction of property during flooding, restriction of water storage increasing the amount of flooding, and increased erosion and sedimentation.

The definition of floodplains is based on soil type. Floodplain soils make up 2,302 acres or 5% of the town's land area. The largest areas are found along the Bearcamp, Beech, Dan Hole, Lovell and Pine Rivers. The Town of Ossipee Floodplain Ordinance is contained within the Ossipee Zoning Ordinance.

FEMA maps identify the floodplains in Ossipee.

See the Natural Resources chapter for Implementation Recommendations on Floodplains.

Open Space

It is important to preserve open space in developed areas. Results of the Master Plan Survey show that people want to be able to see grass and trees. All of the village areas in Ossipee should have a natural area or park. It improves the appearance of the village and instills pride in the community. New residential housing developments should retain open space, sometimes called green space, for residents to enjoy, rather than chopping the entire acreage into separate lots, which is called sprawl. Sprawl increases the cost of services paid by taxpayers. Conversely, clustered housing designed with shared septic and or water systems can retain large tracts of open space for all to enjoy and reduce service costs to taxpayers.

Commercial areas planned around a green space with shared access roads from major highways is also desirable in terms of better traffic flow as well as for attractiveness. See the Ossipee Corridor & Planning Initiative Final Report of June 1, 1999, for traffic access recommendations. Setbacks required under the Zoning Ordinance can become important buffers and serve as pocket-sized open space if naturally growing trees, shrubs and groundcover are retained. They offer visual enjoyment as well as habitat for wildlife.

Retaining large open space areas preserves scenic beauty, encourages sustainable forestry, allows the land to be put into Current Use to save taxes, and preserves wildlife habitats. Above all, the mountains, lakes and ponds, river corridors, forests, and dark skies all help define Ossipee open space as well as the rural character that residents value so highly.

The largest tracts of open space in Ossipee are unfragmented lands from 500 to 5000 acres and more.

As more people move to Ossipee these tracts may be opened to development and subdivision by major roads. Their value as open space would diminish if development

were to negatively impact the scenic landscape and rural character of the area, or threaten wildlife populations through disruption of habitat and food sources.

Until recently in Ossipee there were no proposals to build a supersized or so-called “big box” store so common elsewhere. Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations can adopt guidelines for their construction whether the building will serve commercial or other purposes. To prevent Open Space reduction the combined scale of the building, signage and parking should suit the landform where it is located, and not vice versa, especially where a hillside, forest, scenic viewshed or rural roadside corridor is involved.

Besides possible permanent elimination of Open Space a “big box” commercial building unleashes a spiral of subsequent land use changes in the community. Increased traffic prompts drivers onto lesser used roadways during hours of high visitation. Additional businesses move in to further reduce Open Space, and so on. Learning how other communities have successfully balanced Open Space preservation with “big box” entry and associated growth, and seeking similar solutions in Ossipee, can achieve positive outcomes.

Some communities have accommodated supersized building while retaining open space and rural landscape “feel” through good design, site use and architecture. “Green” building that conserves energy can help reduce strain on rural resources. Building bulk, appearance, shape, spacing, site placement, footprint, height, style and even color offer best results when they complement rather than overwhelm the landscape. Parking lots can actually serve as Open Space if designed to suit the landform, use pervious surfaces and are laid out with attractive seasonal plantings. In some communities the sites even incorporate multiple uses such as fitness trails for walking or biking to offer new Open Space recreational opportunities. In general, setbacks that retain the natural vegetation with mature trees, shrubs and groundcover provide good buffers to maintain rural character. Landscaped berms may be necessary where natural slope does not afford sufficient roadside screening.

Implementation Recommendations:

Revise guidelines on recommended percentage of land area to be retained as Open Space.

Encourage setbacks required under the Zoning Ordinance to serve as pocket Open Spaces in and between developed lots.

Identify and preserve Open Space both within and connecting developed areas of town as contiguous tracts of natural vegetation, wildlife habitat and corridors.

Preserve corridors to support wildlife habitat and use patterns where land use change would affect large unfragmented tracts.

Adopt into Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations the relevant best practices and design guidelines of communities to ensure that supersized or “big box” buildings complement retention of Open Space and rural identity.

Require qualified independent review, as part of the planning process for proposed “big box” sites, to identify best ways to retain Open Space, scenic landscape, rural character, and wildlife habitat.

Slope

The slope of the land refers to its general gradient. It is defined as the change in general elevation over horizontal distance and is expressed as a percentage that represents the relationship between vertical and horizontal distance.

Data on slopes can be obtained from topographic maps prepared by the United States Geological survey and from Soil Survey information prepared by the Soils Conservation Service. One of the ways slope can be grouped is by the percent of slope: from 0-8%, from 8-15%, and from 15-25%. The first group has the least restrictions and the most capacity for development. The middle group has some restrictions and has moderate capacity. The last group has significant restrictions and poor capability for development.

Land areas with slopes greater than 25% are classified as a critical resource not capable of supporting development. There are about 5982 acres or 13% of the land that fall into this category in Ossipee.

Together with 6726 acres with slope from 15-25%, this identifies 28% of Ossipee as having some restrictions because of slope primarily in the Ossipee Mountain Range. Steep slopes limit the capacity for development, because they allow more surface water run-off causing erosion and have less soil depth to filter septage effluent. Cost and accessibility are also factors.

See the Natural Resources chapter for Implementation Recommendations on Slope.

Unfragmented Land

It is important to protect large tracts of unfragmented land from detrimental development; these are continuous blocks of land not bisected by any major roads. The three largest pieces, each more than 5000 acres, are located to the northwest in the Ossipee Mountains and include four watersheds: the Lower Bearcamp, Lovell, Dan Hole, and Beech River Watersheds. The Pine River Watershed is the location of several unfragmented land tracts between 500 and 2000 acres, as well as a 3500 to 5000 acre tract east and west of Archers Pond.

Some of the benefits of unfragmented land are that they provide corridors for wildlife, allow water to pass through the drainage system unimpeded, permit large-scale management plans, and prevent sprawl.

They also present scenic vistas and viewsheds that significantly contribute to the positive quality of life in the town, add to property value and enhance the enjoyment of being in Ossipee. It is not an overstatement to say these tracts have largely defined the community, are highly valued and should remain in as nearnatural state as possible.

As land values rise, unfragmented tracts that are not permanently protected will come under increasing pressure to be subdivided and developed. Landowners can enjoy a reduction in taxes owed by putting land into Current Use, as long as they do not develop the land. The requirements to put land into Current Use are becoming more strict. The landowner must actively manage the land to get the biggest decrease in property taxes. Selling the land to Conservation groups or giving Conservation Easements is another way to insure that the land will continue to be unfragmented. The Ossipee Conservation

Commission worked with the Dan Hole Pond conservancy to buy a large piece of land they call the Thurley Mountain Project.

Many people made small donations, and the Dan Hole Pond group was able to secure the property.

Implementation Recommendations:

Inventory large unfragmented tracts to identify where preservation and conservation should be of highest priority for natural resources protection.

Encourage protection of unfragmented lands through purchase of lands and easements, and work with landowners who wish to preserve tracts at minimal costs to them.

Preserve Riparian corridors (300-foot buffers) along significant streams between large unfragmented lands to protect wildlife.

Conduct a survey of any unfragmented land if it is proposed for major land use change, such as development, to determine measures needed to protect wildlife habitat and corridors.

Some of the most important pieces of land to preserve are those that have several important factors cooccurring on the land. A number of these factors have been identified and mapped by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. They are Source Water Protection Areas, Stratified drift aquifers, Favorable gravel well sites, Riparian zones (300 foot buffer on streams), Prime Agricultural soils, Soils of statewide importance, Hydric A and B soils, and Unfragmented lands. Identifying these areas is a step in saving them from development, guaranteeing public access, protecting the water supply, and generating revenue from timber sales.

Areas in which these factors co-occur, making them even more important to preserve, are located around Ossipee Lake and Garland Pond, Ossipee Valley, along Pine River, the Beech River, Bearcamp River, Lovell River and the West Branch River, and along Route 16. For more specific information, consult the spreadsheet in the Appendix.

Implementation Recommendations:

Prioritize lands for preservation with high co-occurrence factors that otherwise meet criteria for protection.

LAND CAPABILITY ANALYSIS

Understanding the constraints imposed upon development by land characteristics provides a tool for guiding the location and intensity of future development. From a legal perspective, the analysis of land capability provides the foundation and rationale for land use regulations adopted by the town.

Soils are grouped by their ability to provide treatment of septic affluent, therefore they are very important in determining what development is appropriate on a piece of land. A description of individual soil categories is provided in the Appendix. The type of soil on a piece of land determines its potential for future development.

In 1983 the Planning Board identified 6,881 acres capable of intense development, 10,683 acres which would support moderate development, and 5,436 acres that could have limited development. A new Land Use Field Survey should be done to identify where development has taken place and how much acreage is not developed in the three categories.

The 1983 Master Plan identified areas capable of handling more development. They are identified in the Future Land Use map in the older Master Plan as the Villages of Center Ossipee and Ossipee, Commercial Centers along Route 16 and 25 east, and low-density rural, residential areas.

Infill, where vacant lots in currently developed areas are built up, is the least expensive for a community, because there is less drain on community services. This only applies where the land is capable of bearing more development. One of the most time-consuming tasks tackled for this Master Plan Revision was the updating of the Subdivision Chart due to the large increase in the number of lots developed in some of the subdivisions.

Lakes Region Planning Commission suggests there is benefit in asking Subdivision and Site Plan applicants to provide a written description of their proposed project, stating the purpose, scope and potential impacts on the immediate area and community in general with respect to aesthetics, land use capability and water resources. This way each applicant would provide their understanding and perception of how their proposal fits into the community and impacts the rural character held in such high regard.

The Commission also suggests both Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations inform applicants that the Planning Board may request an impact analysis, conducted by a qualified consultant, to better understand the impact of the proposed development on the immediate area and community in general.

Implementation Recommendations:

Do a new Land Use Field Survey to update information used for planning guidance.

Request Site Plan and Subdivision applicants to provide a written description of their project and its impact on the immediate area and community.

Advise Site Plan and Subdivision applicants that an impact analysis by qualified consultant may be required.

CONTROLLING DEVELOPMENT

Results of the 1998 Master Plan Survey show continued strong support for land use controls, with a majority in favor of Zoning, Subdivision Regulations, Planning Board, Building Codes, Wetland Ordinance, Septic Codes, Agricultural and Woodlands Preservation and Water Pollution Control.

Zoning

Zoning can enhance the value of private property and protect the public interest. It helps avoid conflict between incompatible land uses and limits the impact of development on abutters. It allows a town to protect those values they hold dear by discouraging strip development along Route 16, revitalizing the villages with mixed land uses, and preserving their historic heritage. It can encourage shared access from major roads into a number of businesses, like the Indian Mound Shopping Center.

Since the Ossipee Zoning Ordinance is a working document, which can be changed by a vote of the townspeople, refer to the present one for specific details. The fact that the Ordinance is easily changed, requires the voters to be sure they understand all the ways a change will impact the town. A good way to insure that the Ordinance does what the people want it to do is to do a future build out analysis, which conforms to the Ordinance.

The Zoning Ordinance contains performance standards that spell out the requirements and limits on the landowner and what he can do on his property. The environmental standards limit dust, smoke, and hazardous materials. Also regulated are lighting, sewage, noise, traffic, and building height, for example.

Implementation Recommendations:

Do a future build-out analysis to see how development patterns that conform to the current Zoning Ordinance will serve community needs for housing and commerce balanced against impact on rural character, preservation of wildlife habitat and scenic landscapes.

Light Pollution

Ossipee and much of Northern New Hampshire enjoy some of the darkest skies in the US, to the delight of astronomers and amateur stargazers. Light pollution, a relatively new term, could quickly detract from our rural heritage if outdoor lighting fails to minimize the amount of light and glare cast into the night sky. Fortunately, appropriate outdoor lighting and illumination technology is available today to light areas safely and efficiently without polluting the night sky.

To maintain the historic and rural character of the town and to prevent loss of visibility in the night sky, outside lighting should be fully shielded, so no light rays are emitted above the horizon from the any part of the lamp (exceptions are: temporary emergency lighting, hazard warning lights, etc.). Light sources should also incorporate new technology that offers better light control and uses less energy.

The NH Office of Energy and Planning advises that dark sky preservation is a regional issue that every town must address if people are going to be able to enjoy the night sky. They note that this opportunity is virtually gone in many urban areas. One effective way to have control over lighting in new development would be to include such guidelines in Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations and also expand the section on lighting in the present Zoning Ordinance.

See the Natural Resources chapter for Implementation Recommendations for Dark Sky preservation.

Zoning Changes

A number of changes have been made in the Zoning Ordinance over the years, which reflect the desires of the citizens. These are often put forth by small groups of people, but must be voted on during an election to be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. An example is the Corridor Zone which is supposed to be limited to low trip generation uses to cut down with the interference and slowing down of traffic on Route 16 between the intersections (see Ossipee Corridor & Planning Initiative Final Report of June 1, 1999). Another change voted by the townspeople was the reduction of required lot size to one acre, which actually increases the amount of development possible and could affect the scenic landscape if every buildable slope held one house per acre. Some aspects of the Zoning Ordinance have not been dealt with frequently, such as Cluster Zoning, and the Floating Light Industrial Zone. These may need alterations.

The Zoning requirements for multi-family housing in our ordinance were challenged in court. The Planning Board and their attorney developed an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that would remove the requirements that multi-family homes be located in existing buildings and on town water and sewer.

If voters had approved it, there would have been a significant change in the amount of workforce housing, which could be placed in Ossipee, but it was defeated by the voters at the March 2004 election. A more conservative amendment passed in 2005, and yet another article before the voters in 2006 was defeated.

The Court extended the deadline to the 2007 Town Meeting where voters will revisit the matter.

Articles of the Zoning Ordinance set up requirements for manufactured home subdivisions and parks.

However, it is important to know that a majority of Ossipee citizens have never supported the segregation of manufactured housing, so manufactured homes can be placed in the rural, residential, and village zones.

Requirements for creating a subdivision are contained in the Subdivision Regulations. The Planning Board has held an additional meeting per month over the last two years to see what changes need to be made. It is important that the Subdivision Regulations and all the other documents are consistent with the Master Plan. Site Plan Review is required for commercial use or more than two family use. The Planning Board is currently refining a list of items for consideration in a Site Plan Review, which include items like the amount of parking, drainage, traffic safety, and lot coverage. The Site Plan Review Regulations for Ossipee were revised a few years ago.

The Planning Board also grants Mergers, Boundary Line Adjustments and Gravel Pit Excavation and Restoration Permits. The Planning Board has focused on bringing the gravel pits in Ossipee into compliance with RSA 155E and the Ossipee Excavation and Restoration Ordinance. This process will take some years to complete.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment grants Variances and Special Exceptions to Articles of the Zoning Ordinance, Equitable Waivers of Dimensional Requirements and Review of Administrative Decisions.

The Zoning Enforcement Officer issues building permits to applicants who conform to the Zoning Ordinance. He refers those with special needs to the appropriate board. He also reviews sign permit applications. He works under the authority of the Board of Selectmen. This is a fulltime position, allowing time for him to check that conditions of decisions are followed, and to check construction and issue occupancy permits, and town driveway permits with the highway foreman.

In the fall of 2004 a statewide building code went into effect in Ossipee that the Zoning Officer enforces. The 1983 Master Plan and the 1988 Goals and Objectives both recommended that Ossipee adopt building codes, but they have not been brought to the citizens for a vote within the last ten years. Now in 2006, these statewide regulations are closely followed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer with the three Fire Chiefs.

Lakes Region Planning Commission recommends enhancing the Site Plan Regulations using the Zoning Ordinance as guidance for language and much of the relevant detail. As Site Plan Review is the opportune time to address environmental characteristics, LRPC recommends that the Planning Board work with a professional planner to develop a comprehensive Site Plan Review Regulations document.

This process will entail review of the town's existing Zoning Ordinance to evaluate items that should be addressed in the Site Plan. It should also look at language that could be adopted specific to the supersized or "big box" development. The Commission also recommends the town develop a design guidebook that provides illustrative examples of desirable views, lighting, architecture, landscaping, signage, etc. for clarity.

Development of a Capital Improvement Plan falls within the jurisdiction of the Planning Board. It must be approved by the voters at the annual town election. In addition to the benefits of preparing for large expenditures, the Capital Improvement Plan would allow the town to collect impact fees for community services identified in Subdivision or Site Plan Review hearings.

Implementation Recommendations

Enhance Site Plan Review with Regulations using Zoning Ordinance language and relevant details for guidance.

Create Site Plan Review Regulations to address environmental characteristics.

Develop comprehensive Site Plan Review Regulations with professional planner including review of items in Zoning Ordinance that should be addressed in Site Plan and language specific to multifamily dwellings and supersized buildings.

The Planning Board should begin to prepare a Capital Improvement Plan to present to the voters.

Aquifer Protection

Ossipee has adopted some aquifer protection measures, similar to the 1983 Master Plan recommendations. A Water Resource Management Plan has been incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance as Article 20 in 1989. It sets up Water Resource Protection Districts to protect the aquifer, the Watershed Recharge Area and the Community water source at that time.

Chapter 3: Land Use - Page 12 The plan prohibits some uses and allows others with a Special Use Permit. In the permitting process, the Selectmen, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission and the Fire Department have an opportunity to express any concerns they have about the use in the Water Protection District. The restrictions serve to limit the amount of impervious surface, require a surface drainage plan, report potentially hazardous materials, and adequately provide for septage disposal.

See the Natural Resources chapter for Implementation Recommendations on Aquifer Protection.

Forest Management

The 1983 Master Plan and the 1988 Goals and Objectives recommended a series of measures to ensure the long-term productivity of Ossipee's forest resources. Unfortunately, much of the forested land has been heavily cut, and the logs transported out of the area.

The Conservation Commission has practiced good forestry practices on pieces of land under their control, such as Sumner Brook. They hired a forester to develop management plans for all the pieces of property under their jurisdiction. Part of this plan calls for the development of trails for the public through community forestland. Money from rent of the fish hatchery and logging on Conservation land will be spent preserving land. They have embarked on an ambitious plan to obtain and protect undeveloped land to insure that it remains undeveloped. The Commission is investigating the possibility of using Current Use penalties to purchase property for conservation purposes in the future.

The earlier plans recommended the hiring of a town forester to inspect timber cuts. This was put into effect to the benefit of the town. However, the state has now increased the requirements for a person to fill this job to the point that the town must make adjustments in their present policy. As of January 2006, no one had been hired to inspect the timber cuts and make recommendations to the Selectmen.

See the Natural Resources chapter for Implementation Recommendations on Forests.

Wetland Protection

In 1989 Ossipee incorporated a Wetland Ordinance into the Zoning Ordinance in Article 19. The Ossipee Conservation Commission is very diligent about looking into wetland violations and reporting them to NHDES for action. Because the state is overburdened with requests for inspection and action, the process is very lengthy and by then the damage is done. Therefore, the town is pursuing ways to facilitate the process at the local level. They also review applications for permits to do work in the wetlands, before they are sent to NHDES.

NHDES has developed a new application called Permit by Notification intended to speed up the process for a number of specific limited activities. The applicant can proceed with the work unless DES has notified them within 25 days that the project has been disqualified. It remains to be seen how well this will work.

Expedited applications go to the local conservation commissions for approval before they go to NHDES in an attempt to speed up the process for small projects.

See the Natural Resources chapter for Implementation Recommendations on Wetlands.

Lakefront Protection

The Federal Shoreland Protection Act and the Ossipee Floodplain Development Ordinance (1991) provide some lakefront protection. It was also recommended in the earlier plans that septic systems be inspected when a structure is being converted for more intensive use. They may need to be improved or enlarged. As noted in the Housing Chapter, many seasonal homes are being converted to fulltime use, so this is very important and should be continued.

Implementation Recommendations:

Determine desirability of establishing buffer zones around lakes as well as other water bodies and wetlands, as in nearby towns, to assure any tree harvests occur with **care over time**.

Open Space Preservation

Statistics show that open space land costs less in taxes than developed land, because there is less need for town services. A number of large groups such as the Nature Conservancy are attempting to preserve large pieces of endangered ecosystems, such as the Ossipee Pine Barrens. Smaller groups like Green Mountain Conservation Group and the Dan Hole Pond Watershed Trust are also very active. The Ossipee Conservation Commission has participated in a number of these projects by volunteering and donating money.

Naturally vegetated buffer areas can serve as open space and help preserve scenic landscapes even though the buffer zone may be as narrow as a 25-foot setback required under the Zoning Ordinance.

Setbacks left in their natural state, with mature trees, shrubs and groundcover undisturbed can positively impact the community.

Implementation Recommendations:

Encourage use of setbacks as buffers of pocket open space in densely developed areas so that mature trees, shrubs and natural vegetation are retained to provide visual **enjoyment and wildlife protection.**

Conservation Lands

Ossipee has a number of fee ownership parcels of land, which means they are owned by the Town, State, County, or Conservation Group. Many of these areas are of extreme importance and must be maintained if Ossipee is to remain as we know it. They include:

The Lord Farm 5/78-82 (UNH)

The Lovell River Property 7/20 (UNH)

Bearcamp Property 27/25 (UNH)

Bearcamp Memorial Forest 5/62, 63, 64 (NEFF)

Thissell-Smith Memorial Forest 16/1 and 19/142 (NEFF)

Broad Bay Road Parcel 54/15 (Ossipee)

Heath Bog Natural Area 10/15, 16.2, 18, 20, 22 (NH)

Ossipee Lake Natural Area 10/23 (NH)

Garland Pond WMA 14/54, 54.1, 54.2, 62, 101 (NH F&G)

Pine River State Forest 21/24 (NH)

Little Pine River State Forest 22/55 (NH)

Chapter 3: Land Use - Page 14 Carroll County Farm 15/28, 18/72, 72.1, 74, 20/73 (Carroll County)

Sumner Brook 22/51, 24/42 (Ossipee)

Long Sands-Constitution Park 32/127 (Ossipee)

Ossipee Town Forest 13/121, 182 (Ossipee)

Stimson Forest 19/91 (SPNHF)

Ossipee Pine Barrens 2/175 (TNC)

Avery-Merrow Parcel 50/25 (Ossipee)

Dan Hole Conservation Area 12/2, 3 (TNC)

Fogg's Ridge Parcels, Clay 25/ 29, 30 (Ossipee)

Lord Pines State Forest 29/21 (NH)

Ossipee Aggregates Parcel 24/65 (Ossipee)

Small lots in Indian Mound Maps 42 and 43 (Ossipee)

Davis White Lot 4/7 (UNH)

Brown Lot 20/71 (Carroll County)

Garland Pond 14/66.1 (Ossipee)

Deer Cove 35/1 (UNH)

Lot off Brown's Ridge Rd 20/68 (Ossipee)

Indian Mound on Fairway Drive 41/9, 12 (Ossipee)

Captain Lovewell's Lane 39/36 (Ossipee)

Thurley Mtn 6/6,7 (Dan Hole Pond Conservation)

This list was updated May 30, 2006

Eight parcels of land have been added to the list since the last Master Plan was done.

An undetermined number of pieces of land have a conservation easement on them, because frequently the placing of an easement is not reported to the town. If the land was already in Current Use, there was no additional tax benefit from the easement. Land in Current Use and land with Conservation Easements are taxed the same.

A piece of land belonging to the Smiths in Granite (23/27) has a conservation easement held by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Chocorua Forestlands gravel pit (1/4) has an easement held by the state of New Hampshire. The Clark property (15/ 73 and 93) has a conservation easement on it, as does the Geraldine Smith property (16/5.1 and 5.3). The land owned by the Dan Hole Pond Watershed Trust has an easement with the Nature Conservancy. Property owned by the Marusaks (30/77B) has an easement for the public to use a natural spring on the property. SPNHF has a conservation easement on the Sumner Brook property. Often subdividers set aside a lot as green space for the development. When Whitaker subdivided his property, he gave a conservation easement by the river to the town of Ossipee (8/82.1-82.7). Clearly there is need for much more research on easements currently held in Ossipee.

There may be a need for several public sessions on Conservation Easements and deed restrictions so people may better understand their benefit and how they work. The Ossipee Conservation Commission recently sponsored a workshop by The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. In spite of advertisements, attendance was small. A number of important facts were disclosed, such as, in order to make the easement permanent, it must be recorded on the deed.

In January 2003 the Ossipee Conservation Commission voted to use 50% of the money they have and money they receive from future timber sales to purchase conservation

easements or land in Ossipee. Unfortunately, the land they would like to buy costs more than funds available. The following section sheds light on which properties would be important to conserve.

Other Controls

A number of the proposals in the goals and objectives of the previous Master Plan have been carried out with varying degrees of success. The Sign Ordinance has been reviewed several times, but it has been impossible to reach agreement on what should be done. Many of the large signs are controlled by the state or are grandfathered, which means they were there before regulation. A number of other specific state, local, and Federal Regulations are in effect, such as the TeA number of other specific state, local, and Federal Regulations are in effect, such as the Telecommunications Tower Ordinance, the Ossipee Excavation and Reclamation Ordinance, the Federal Clean Water Act, and numerous RSA's.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE

The Smart Growth New Hampshire Steering Committee developed a set of 8 principles that summarize measures to address many of the concerns about development in rural New Hampshire. The Ossipee Planning Board supports them. They are:

1. Maintain traditional compact settlement patterns to efficiently use land resources and investments in infrastructure. In addition, encourage sustainable, energy efficient development to conserve both costs and resources.
2. Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging development that is comfortable for pedestrians and conducive to community life.
3. Incorporate a mix of uses to provide a variety of housing, employment, shopping, services, and social opportunities for all members of the community.
4. Provide choices and safety in transportation to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages.
5. Preserve New Hampshire's working landscape by sustaining farm and forestland and other rural land to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and minimize land use conflicts.
6. Protect environmental quality by minimizing impact from people and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life in New Hampshire.
7. Involve the community in planning and implementing to ensure that the development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community.
8. Manage growth locally, but work with neighboring towns to address common goals and address common problems more effectively.